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### EXTENSION PROGRAM PROJECTION\*

Traditionally the Cooperative Extension Service has always sought the leadership and guidance of local people in determining and carrying out its educational programs. When Extension was first started the formation of a county committee was a prerequisite to the placement of an agent in a county.

Today the county agricultural agents have commodity committees to give specific direction to the agricultural programs; the home demonstration agents have county home demonstration advisory councils, the club agents have county 4-H advisory councils, and the county foresters have forestry advisory committees. These committees and councils are invaluable in guiding the extension work.

Extension is now challenged to do an even better job of program determination. The new approach to program development is termed "program projection." This may be defined as long range program development by a broadly representative group of local people after carefully studying all available information and setting goals for the people to work toward. The essential steps in program projection by a county advisory committee are as follows (These steps 1 through 8 are shown in the diagram):-

(1) Collect basic data and information: The first step is to have Extension personnel collect data for the advisory committee to analyze.

(2) Involvement of people: The county extension agents call together an over-all county planning group representing different geographic areas. Persons are selected for their knowledge and ability to study and appraise situations confronting not only farm families but rural non-farm families as well. For example, a farmer member of the committee in addition to his interests in agriculture will be equally concerned with the development of the rural non-farm family, with educational opportunities, health conditions and other things affecting a better family living for all people in the county.

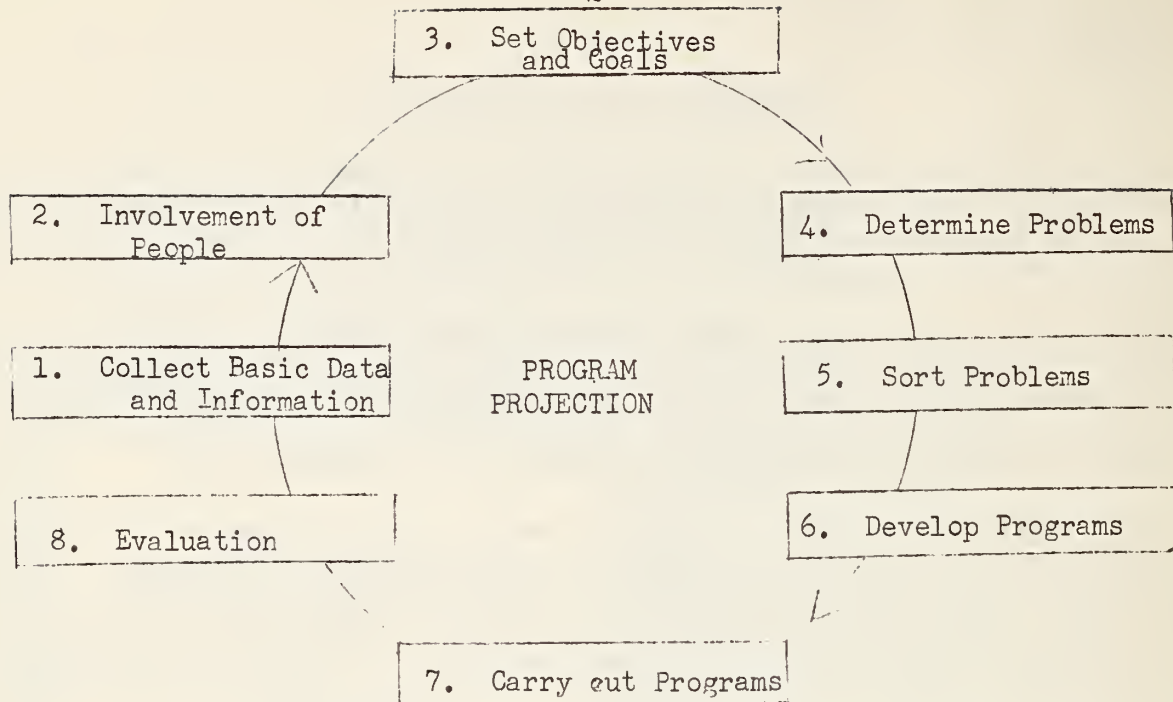
(3) Set objectives and goals: The committee, having studied basic data and information presented or requested by it, will be expected to make an appraisal of where rural people "are" at the present time. With these "bench-marks" established the committee will then project long range objectives for the people and set up goals to strive for. This can be done for various segments of agriculture, for home living conditions and standards, for education, youth development, health conditions and facilities and for many other areas.

(4) Determine problems: In setting up long range objectives and specific goals for the rural people the committee will quickly note some problems or "road blocks" likely to be encountered when the people advance from present situations to potential situations (several years hence) envisioned by the committee. These problems must be overcome in order for the people to reach their potential goals.

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\*Presented at first meeting of Merrimack County Extension Service Advisory Committee October 27, 1955, by S. W. Hoitt, Associate Director.





(5) Sort problems: The problems noted in 4 above can be sorted into three groups:-

- A. Problems extension should be able to handle.
- B. Problems some other existing agency can handle.
- C. Problems for which no existing agency appears equipped to handle.

(6) Develop programs to overcome the problems or "road blocks." Herein the advisory committee can give invaluable assistance in guiding the extension service to embark on educational programs which the committee believes will be of the greatest benefit to the people.

For the problems grouped in 5-B the committee can request the extension agents to enlist the cooperation of existing agencies to solve them.

The problems listed in 5-C may fall into two categories (1) those outside the function of any agency and (2) those within the realm of an agency but which cannot be handled because of insufficient personnel. Recommendations as to the best course of action in each case would be within the province of the committee.

(7) Carry out programs as developed.

(8) Evaluation of accomplishments. This affords an opportunity to partially measure results. How well have the programs aided the people to move from their "present situation" to their "potential situation."

At this point the committee is ready to start another round of the circle. For any specific problem the committee would determine whether or not the program as carried out has wholly or partially eliminated the problem. The nature of a continuing or revised program would be determined by a study of the current status which would include an analysis of any new basic data or information relevant to the situation or problem at hand.

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The program projection process will require several meetings during the year. There is much information available. In areas where there is inadequate data for sound decision making the committee may wish to have surveys made to collect data. This is a challenging assignment. However, I am confident that each member accepts the assignment with a full realization of the great contribution the committee can make to program projection which will be in the best interests of the people.

